



The Official Consular Newsletter of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia

Ambassador's Message

Greetings! I am delighted to be the new U.S. Ambassador to Georgia.

After 30 years of diplomatic service, I know how important it is that our fellow Americans residing or working overseas have up-to-date, useful consular information at their disposal. In Embassy Tbilisi we are very fortunate to have a great U.S. Citizen Services team. Our Consul and Consular staff are conscientious and excel in services such as renewals of passports, notariats, social security information, U.S. Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, emergency consular services, emergency messages and warden assignments.

The best way to learn about consular services and to receive emergency messages during your stay in Georgia is to register in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Plan \(STEP\)](#). This program plays an important role in keeping U.S. citizens traveling abroad safe and informed.



In this edition of the newsletter you will find information relevant to your stay in Georgia: answers to commonly asked questions about travel with minors, U.S. vital records and getting Social Security benefits in Georgia. Before you travel, I encourage you to consult the U.S. Department of State's Country Specific information found [here](#).

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Ambassador Ian Kelly



Our Embassy in Tbilisi

<http://georgia.usembassy.gov>



Green Card Program

www.dvlottery.state.gov



Immigration to the U.S.

www.USCIS.gov



Report Fraud

TbilisiFraud@state.gov



Join Us

<https://www.facebook.com/tbilisi.usembassy>

How Can I Contact the Consular Section?



American Citizen Services (ACS) are available by appointment. Visitors may receive multiple services during the same visit — please make a separate appointment for each service (e.g., to apply for passports and obtain a notary service, make two appointments). Arrive a few minutes before your appointment to allow time to go through security. ACS hours of operation are 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Monday - Thursday, except [holidays](#). To make an ACS appointment, please visit:

<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>

Address: # 11 George Balanchine Str. 0131 Tbilisi

U.S. Citizen Services Telephone: (995 32) 227-77-24

E-mail: askconsultbilisi@state.gov

In case you need an emergency appointment, please contact us via phone or email and we will try to accommodate your request at the earliest convenience.

The following services do not require an appointment and you may visit the Consular Section any time during ACS hours:

- * Pick up passports or Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- * Pick up Social Security or tax refund checks

Report an emergency or urgent matters (e.g., death, hospitalization, arrest of a U.S. citizen) during Consular Section work hours 8:30-5:30 M-F by phone or email above.

After Hours Emergency Contact: (995 32) 227-7000

Includes Crime Victims, Arrest, Death, Child Abduction, Life Threatening Illness or Medical Conditions, Lost/Stolen U.S. Passport, or other safety and welfare issues of a U.S. citizen.



What if I have a question about visas?

THE AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES UNIT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ASSIST WITH VISA INQUIRIES. ALL VISA INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE CALL CENTER LISTED BELOW. PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL VISA APPLICATIONS ARE ONLY ACCEPTED ONLINE. FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE VISA PROCESS PLEASE VISIT

WWW.USTRAVELDOCS.COM

Contact Information for Visa Correspondence and Scheduling

Email: support-georgia@ustraveldocs.com

Phone: Callers in Georgia Call +995 32 2471 160.

Callers in the United States Call 703 988 7103.

NEW!! Visit [here](#) to get live chat assistance, track the status of your passport or application, or Skype with a representative during business hours.

On the first Friday of each month at 10:00 EDT an expert from the Visa Office in Washington answers questions via the Consular Affairs Facebook Page www.Facebook.com/TravelGov.



While in Georgia



- ◆ U.S. citizens staying in Georgia for 365 days or less do not require a visa to enter Georgia. For more information please click [here](#).
- ◆ In case your stay in Georgia is more than 365 days, U.S. citizens should obtain residence permits at the House of Justice. For instructions please click [here](#).
- ◆ A foreign driver's license is valid in Georgia for one year after arrival. After one year, foreign nationals must obtain a Georgian national driver's license from the Service Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. For additional information please click [here](#).
- ◆ Visa requirements for U.S. citizens for all countries can be found in the Country Specific Information on travel.state.gov. Travelers should regularly check the expiration date of their passports. Many countries require a passport to be valid for at least six months beyond the proposed dates of travel, so passports nearing expiration should be renewed well in advance. The normal processing time for regular passport renewal is 2-3 weeks.

How to get U.S. Vital Records and Apostille

Vital records (birth, death or marriage certificates) are usually held by state, county or city governments. Please follow the link (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>) for convenient guidance on how to obtain vital records in your state.

The Consular section **CANNOT** obtain vital records documents on your behalf.

There are fee-based on-line services that can help obtain these records:

- www.Vitalchek.com allows you to request birth, death, and marriage certificates online, by phone, or by fax.
- www.usbirthcertificate.net can help you obtain the U.S. vital records.



Georgia ratified the Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents. This alleviates the need to have the Department of State authenticate U.S. federal and state documents. To apostille official documents issued in Georgia visit the Civil Registry Agency (CRA) in the Ministry of Justice located at 67a A.Tsereteli Ave., Tbilisi, Georgia. You can find the list of documents that the CRA will apostille, instructions on how to get an apostille and costs associated with an apostille [here](#).



Your Vote Counts

Now all U.S. citizens can receive their blank ballots electronically. Depending on the state in which you are eligible to vote, you may get your ballot by email, fax, or internet download. To start, go to www.FVAP.gov to complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). Print and sign the form, then return it to your local election office in the United States. Find more information [here](#).

Can I Get Social Security in Georgia?



Your Payments While You Are Outside the United States

Social Security Restrictions

Social Security restrictions prohibit sending payments to individuals in certain countries, including Georgia. However, exceptions can be made for certain eligible beneficiaries in countries with Social Security restrictions.

To qualify for an exception, you must agree to the conditions of payment. One of the conditions is that you must appear in person at the U.S. Embassy once every three months to receive your benefits. Contact your nearest U.S. Social Security office or email us at AskConsulTbilisi@state.gov for additional information.

We are happy to announce an important change in the Special Payment Policy and Procedure for restricted countries !!!

Certain **Parent** representative payees may now qualify to receive payments for a U.S. citizen child beneficiary in their custody. We do not ordinarily pay benefits to representative payees. However, a child beneficiary, whether a minor or adult disabled child, may qualify for payment through a qualified payee if:

The child is living with a custodial parent in the SSA restricted country; and

The custodial parent is appointed to act as the child's representative payee; and

The custodial representative payee parent and the child beneficiary both visit the Consular Section every three months

Please allow a minimum of 8-10 weeks after receipt of the forms by SSA for payments to be resumed.



USAJOBS.gov is the U.S. Government's official one-stop source for Federal jobs and employment information.

It provides worldwide job vacancy information, employment information fact sheets, job applications, and forms online. It has online resume development and electronic transmission capabilities. Job seekers can apply for positions online.

USAJOBS.gov is updated every business day from a database of more than 30,000 worldwide job opportunities and is available to job seekers in a variety of formats to ensure access for people with differing physical and technological capabilities. It is convenient, user friendly, accessible through the computer or telephone, and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Benefits.gov is the official benefits website of the U.S. government, providing citizens with an online eligibility prescreening tool to help you find government benefits that you may be eligible to receive.

Benefits.gov does not allow you to apply for benefits and cannot guarantee your eligibility for any program. In addition, Benefits.gov is not designed to be a comprehensive listing of all programs for which you may be eligible. Its purpose is to provide you with a list of benefits you may be eligible to receive, as well as information on how to apply for those programs.

Are You Traveling with a Minor Child?

If a child (under the age of 18) is traveling with only one parent or someone who is not a parent or legal guardian, what paperwork should the adult have to indicate permission or legal authority to have that child in their care?



Due to increasing incidents of child abductions in disputed custody cases and as possible victims of child pornography, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) strongly recommends that unless the child is accompanied by both parents, the adult have a note from the child's other parent (or, in the case of a child traveling with grandparents, uncles or aunts, sisters or brothers, friends, or in groups (school groups, teen tours, vacation groups), a note signed by both parents) stating "I acknowledge that my wife/husband/etc. is traveling out of the country with my son/daughter/group. He/She/They has/have my permission to do so." [See our Q&A parental consent.](#)

CBP also suggests that this note be notarized.

While CBP may not ask to see this documentation, if they do ask, and you do not have it, you may be detained until the circumstances of the child traveling without both parents can be fully assessed. If there is no second parent with legal claims to the child (deceased, sole custody, etc.) any other relevant paperwork, such as a court decision, birth certificate naming only one parent, death certificate, etc., would be useful.

For more information please visit U.S. Customs and Border Protection's website [here](#).

Tips for photographing an infant or very young child

- ⇒ Place the child in a car seat or on his/her back on a blanket to ensure his/her head is supported.
- ⇒ Use a white/off-white blanket or sheet to provide a proper background.
- ⇒ Ensure the child's eyes are open and the child is facing the camera.
- ⇒ Ensure there are no shadows on the face.

Background is not plain or white/off-white



More than one person in photo



Face is obscured



Not facing the camera



Emergency/Crisis Information



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR U.S. CITIZENS !!!

In case of a crisis and/or natural disaster U.S. citizens in Georgia may tune in to the following FM radio stations for updated U.S. Embassy emergency messages and information for U.S. citizens:

- Radio Green Wave- 107.4 FM (Tbilisi and Gori)
- Radio GIPA — 94.3 FM (Tbilisi)
- Radio Atinati — 105.9 FM (Zugdidi)
- Radio Hereti— 102.8 FM (Lagodekhi and Kakheti)
- Radio Dzveli Kalaki — 107.9 FM (Kutaisi)
- Radio Harmonia — 100.5 FM (Poti)

Emergency-response center 112

(Includes Patrol Police, Medical-Emergency Center, Fire and Rescue Services)

Information Centre

Tel: 118 09

Airport Hotline

Tel: +995 32 2310421; +995 32 2310341

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia](#)

Tel: (995 32) 2945000

[LIST OF DOCTORS](#)

[LIST OF ATTORNEYS](#)

No Doctors or Attorneys are affiliated with the U.S. Embassy and the lists are provided for informational purposes only.

[HOUSE OF JUSTICE](#)

Issues residency permits, Georgian passports, civil documents, and Apostille on Georgian documents.

[DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM](#)

Information on Tourism activities, entertainment, cultural events.

FREE 24/7 HOTLINE - 0 800 800 909

LOCAL UNITED STATES CITIZEN SKILLS/ RESOURCES SURVEY

U.S. citizens abroad may possess critical skills and resources invaluable for helping other U.S. citizens in a time of crisis. The Consular Section in Tbilisi would appreciate your assistance in identifying these skills and resources.

Please email us at askconsultbilisi@state.gov if you are interested in contributing information to the Consular "Skills Bank" and we will send you a survey to complete.

We will keep your responses confidential.

Important Security Announcement



When visiting the Embassy, please remember not to bring mobile phones or any electronic devices (such as Blackberries, iPods, or PDAs), food/drinks, medicine or cosmetic products, as they are not allowed within the Embassy. We also advise that you do not bring large bags, such as backpacks, suitcases or packages to the interview as there are no storage facilities on Embassy grounds.

BY THE NUMBERS PASSPORTS | INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

U.S. Department of State • Bureau of Consular Affairs



DID YOU KNOW?

An estimated 8.7 million U.S. citizens live overseas.

U.S. citizens take more than 80 million trips abroad every year.

STAY CONNECTED WHILE OVERSEAS

travel.state.gov

69 million visits to the site
Find Travel Warnings and Alerts,
country specific information, passport
information and visa requirements.

studentsabroad.state.gov

Information for student travelers.

adoption.state.gov

Providing general information and
country-by-country statistics, alerts,
and notices on intercountry adoptions.



@TravelGov

455,000 followers (April 2015)



Facebook.com/TravelGov

211,000 "Likes" (April 2015)



step.state.gov

Enroll in the **SMART
TRAVELER ENROLLMENT
PROGRAM** for security
and travel updates
on the go!

OUR MISSION: *The mission of the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) is to provide consular services that protect U.S. citizens, ensure U.S. border security, facilitate the entry of legitimate travelers, and foster economic growth.*

HELPING U.S. CITIZENS OVERSEAS:

Our number one priority is to provide U.S. citizens living and traveling overseas with emergency and non-emergency services.

EMERGENCY SERVICES:

- Overseas births of U.S. citizens registered: 66,854
- Emergency passports issued: 41,513
- Welfare/Whereabouts inquiries: 30,807
- Assisted families of 10,245 U.S. citizens who died while abroad
- Prison visits: 8,685
- Security and Emergency Messages published: 1,276
- U.S. citizens repatriated: 1,293

ADOPTIONS AND ABDUCTIONS:

We have a special commitment to helping our most vulnerable citizens.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS:

- Adoptions to the United States: 6,441 (CY 2014)
- Adopted from the United States: 96 (CY 2014)

INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTIONS:

- U.S. children abducted from the United States to other countries: 849 (CY 2014)
- U.S. children returned to the United States from abroad: 521 (CY 2014)
- Children abducted from overseas to the United States: 502 (CY 2014)

PASSPORTS:

We help U.S. citizens obtain the world's premier travel document.

- Passports and passport cards: 14.1 million
- Passport cards issued since 2008: 7.9 million (as of March 2015), which provide entrance via land and sea from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda

PASSPORTS IN CIRCULATION:

- 123 million valid U.S. passports are in circulation
- 38 percent of U.S. citizens have a passport

CONTACT US:

In an emergency, call:

From the United States: 1-888-407-4747; From Overseas: 202-501-4444

U.S. Passport Information:

1-877-4USAPPT (1-877-487-2778); TTY/TDD 1-888-874- 7793

Announcements

Passport News

Beginning Dec. 31, 2015, passport holders will no longer be able to simply pay for extra pages to add to their book when they run out of room. New passport holders will be issued a 52-page book.

U.S. passports will continue to be valid for 10 years and travelers won't have to worry about registering and paying for new visas before they expire so long as they bring their old stamped book along with their new one.



Important Things to Know about DV Lottery



Each year between October and November, the U.S. Department of State runs the Diversity Visa Program commonly called the Green Card Lottery.

- ◆ The only official website for the Diversity Visa Program is dvlottery.state.gov
- ◆ It's free to enter! The money you pay will be on the day of your interview at the U.S. Embassy.
- ◆ Your confirmation number is the only way to access your DV submission. So, don't let anyone have it or you could become a victim of fraud.
- ◆ Scammers will try to take advantage of you. Submit your entry yourself and don't respond to emails or phone calls asking for money. Report fraud at TbilisiFraud@state.gov

Report Fraud

The Consular Section recently created an email address for reporting fraud. You are encouraged to inform us if you possess any information about suspected illegal activity associated with U.S. visa, U.S. passport, or document vendors. In your report, please be as specific as possible. All information provided will remain confidential. Report suspected fraud at TbilisiFraud@state.gov



WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS...

The U.S. Citizen Services Unit is constantly thinking of new ways to improve our service and efficiency.

If you have an idea or a suggestion about how we can make your visit easier, or about topics you'd like to see covered in this newsletter or on our site please, let us know by email:

askconsultbilisi@state.gov

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#)